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## Good Web Design Creates Good PR for Schools

As a new century begins, the ever-increasing need for immediate information has become the norm rather than the exception. No longer is there a cry for a “chicken in every pot.” Now the demand is for “a computer in every household”. Statistics show us that:

- In 2001, 51% of households had computers, compared to 15 percent in 1994.
- In 2000, 98% of all public schools had Internet access compared to 35% in 1994.
- The dominant age range of Users on the Internet is 18 to 35 years old. The average age is approximately 31.

In this age of information at your “finger-tips”, an appropriate, well designed and aesthetically appealing web site that *encourages* the students, parents, teachers, etc. to visit often, should be the goal of all school administrators. Possibly, it is becoming the schools’ most potent tool, reaching anyone and everyone at any given time. The following objectives are the foundation of a well-designed web site: Image, Information, Innovation, Interaction, Involvement.

### IMAGE

A web site is an extension of the school; it is the community’s perception of the school and can be critical to the school’s public relations effort. The correct image must be projected not what it used to be, or what it should be, but *what it is*.

Goals and philosophy of the school are a part of the image. These must be presented clearly. For example, the major goal is to graduate the students; however, the excitement of building outstanding young men and women, while having fun along the way, should be shared as well.

The site should not be confusing. The following are essential for a successful web site:

- Use traditional and medium sized fonts. Vision quality varies among visitors.
- Avoid using music, particularly on the home page. The majority of users find music objectionable.
- Never use flashing colors. Flashing colors have been known to trigger seizures.
- The site should not be ‘busy’. Most visitors are seeking information, not an opportunity to be entertained or hindered by slow-loading graphics.

### INFORMATION

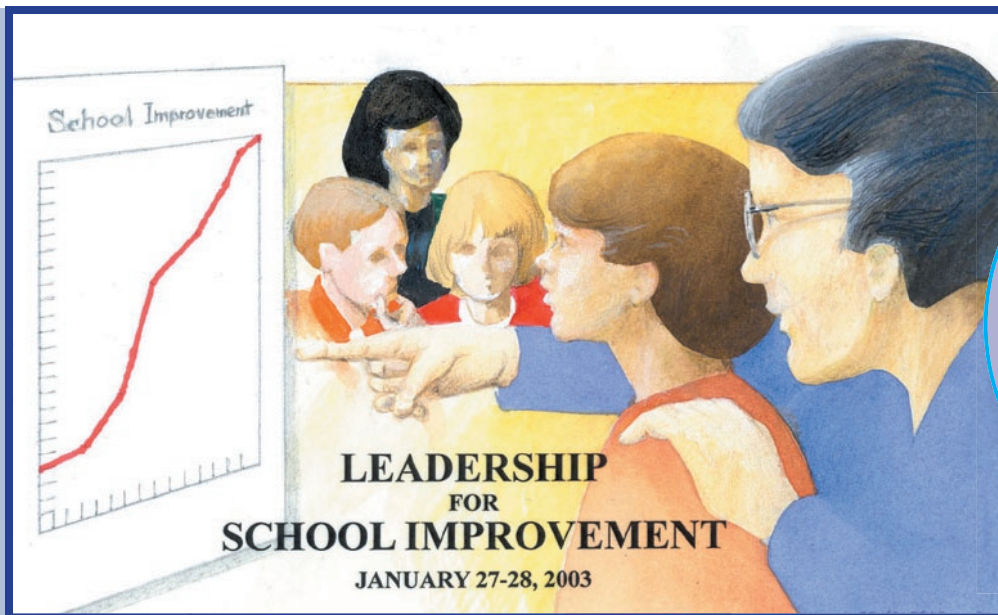
Relate as much information as possible about the school and its programs. Emphasize how the school serves the community other than with traditional day classes. Are there alternative educational programs? If so, provide the success rates and contact information.

Student clubs and organizations should be highlighted, especially students’ community service. Indeed, this is showing the school in its best possible light.



**I**mage  
**n**formation  
**n**novation  
**n**teraction  
**n**volvement

(continued on page 6)



**WINTER CONFERENCE**

# leadership for SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT



**Roland Barth**  
Educational Consultant  
*"School Leadership Today"*



**Dave Emmert**  
Indiana School Boards Association  
*"Recent Legal Developments"*



**Hugh Gouldthorpe**  
Owens & Minors  
*"I've Always Looked Up to Giraffes"*

- Annual Breakfast
- Breakout Sessions
- Professional Development Room

Please visit [www.doe.state.in.us/ipla](http://www.doe.state.in.us/ipla)  
for the agenda

# indiana principal leadership academy WINTER CONFERENCE

## January 27-28, 2003 Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites Indianapolis, Indiana

Name \_\_\_\_\_ IPLA Group Number \_\_\_\_\_

First Name for Name Tag \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Corporation Number \_\_\_\_\_

Corporation Name \_\_\_\_\_

Corporation Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School Number \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### IPLA Graduate & Current Participants

"Early Bird Special" Registration \$110  
(Registration received on or before 12/1/02)

Regular Registration \$125  
(Registration received after 12/1/02)

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

### Guest Participant (non IPLA Graduates)

Regular Registration \$125

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please check method  
of payment.

☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ PO # \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Deadline is January 7, 2003 • No Refunds After January 24, 2003

Make checks payable to IPLA Alumni Association, Inc.  
Mail registration form to: Greenwood Northeast Elementary School  
c/o Troy Watkins • 99 Crestview Drive • Greenwood, Indiana 46143  
Phone (317) 889-4080 • Fax (317) 889-4087



## Models for Student Web-Based Research

By Jeffrey Branzburg

This page is designed specifically with the new-to-technology educator in mind. Please feel free to reproduce this page for use in your teacher training sessions or other staff development efforts.

We all would like our students to conduct efficient research on the Web, but having them go to Google or Yahoo! or any of the other major search engines frequently involves a time-consuming narrowing-down process and can yield mixed results. Using an established construct, however, can structure your students' research experience to maximize success. Here are a few of the models available.

### HOTLISTS

A simple way to organize Internet research for your students is by using a hotlist—essentially a list of sites all related to a single topic of study. Rather than sending students to a search engine to do research on Thomas Jefferson, for example, you preselect a dozen or so Web sites related to Jefferson from which they can gather and synthesize the information they need.



### SCAVENGER HUNTS

A Web scavenger hunt consists of questions related to a topic, and sites where students can go to find the answers. Scavenger hunts are more structured than hotlists, and can sometimes be more appropriate for younger students who need additional guidance.

### WEBQUESTS

A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which students use the Web and other resources to gather information with a specific task in mind. WebQuests frequently resemble simulations and many times include a role-playing aspect. For example, a task might be to present possible solutions to drought conditions in a rain-starved area of the world. Students work in teams, playing the roles of scientist, newspaper reporter, and anthropologist. WebQuests include an introduction to set the stage and provide background, an appealing and attainable task, sources of information (Web sites, books, articles, people), a guide to the process learners will follow, directions on how to arrange the information gathered, and a conclusion that reinforces what was learned.



### RESEARCH MODULES

Online research modules ask students to make choices based on the results

of research. As with WebQuests, they begin by setting the stage with a scenario. For example:

*Congratulations, you have just won a homestead lottery. The United States government will give you a five-acre plot of land in one of three mountain areas: Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, or Kilauea. You want to build a house on the land, and you will need to decide which location is the safest, considering both the likelihood of a volcanic eruption and the types of volcanic eruptions.*

Students are instructed to investigate each location. In the process, they brainstorm questions, develop keywords to help rank the sites, and figure out how and where to begin. To find information, they use Web-based resources provided by the teacher, then come to conclusions and report back to the class.

The phases of the research cycle (question, plan, gather, sort, sift and analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and report) are followed, and the focus is on higher-level thinking and high-quality electronic resources.

### WEB TRIPS

A Web trip is a customized, guided research activity that teachers create for their students to complete online. Web trips can be built using Web Trip Maker, a subscription-based service on the Lightspan Web site where you can create your own online research quiz or browse the spotlighted Web trips created by other teachers. Students are given a specific research question and a link to a site that will help them solve it. After submitting a correct answer, they proceed to the next question. Web trips can challenge students' research, critical-thinking, and writing skills.



### SITES TO JUMP-START STUDENT RESEARCH

The following sites are good places to begin experimenting with student online research.

#### Hotlists and Scavenger Hunts

- Filamentality: [www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil)
- TrackStar: [trackstar.hprtec.org](http://trackstar.hprtec.org)

#### WebQuests

- The WebQuest Page: [edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html](http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html)
- Ozline: [www.ozline.com](http://www.ozline.com)
- Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators: [school.discovery.com/schrockguide/webquest/webquest.html](http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/webquest/webquest.html)

#### Web Trips

- Lightspan: [www.lightspan.com](http://www.lightspan.com)

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## BOOKS FOR LEADERS

### The Eight Steps Professional Development Book

By Sue Cox



By now, your schools have completed a school improvement plan and professional development program. After breathing a sigh of relief that the hectic first year of PL 221 is over, you probably realized that developing a plan is just the first step of the school improvement process. As you know, implementing your plan involves a continuous process of monitoring, adjusting, refining, and assessing progress towards your goals. During this implementation process, you may need to find additional resources, effective professional development strategies, and ideas for using technology to enhance both professional development and student learning. The *Eight Steps to Highly Effective 'Next Generation' Professional Development for Learning and Technology* materials can provide valuable assistance in this process.

Developed by the Indiana Professional Development Committee for Learning and Technology, the *Eight Steps* book, CD, and web site were designed to help school leaders and school improvement teams plan and implement effective professional development programs. The book includes an eight step planning process, effective professional development strategies and examples, as well as helpful links and resources. The CD includes: an electronic version of the book that can be used, modified, or adapted to meet your school's specific needs; a developmental continuum for technology use from enGauge, a national framework for effective technology use; a Discrepancy Analysis tool for a quick assessment of your school's current status; plus additional resources. The web site, found at <http://www.doe.state.in.us/olr/eightsteps/welcome.html>, gives more ideas, examples, and resources for each of the eight steps. These materials will help your school implement your professional development program and embed technology use appropriately so that it supports and enhances learning for educators and students.

The *Eight Steps* book and CD are available at no charge to Indiana educators. To obtain copies contact, Indiana Department of Education Office of Learning Resources.

### Indiana Learns: Increasing Indiana Student Academic Achievement Through School Library Media and Technology Programs

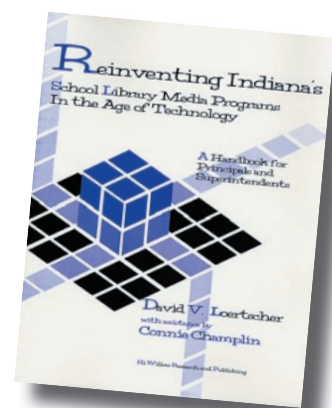
by Dr. David Loertscher

In the age of the Internet, is a school library needed? What does the research say about the role of the school library program and student achievement? What strategies can principals use to create effective library media programs? Two new books with an Indiana focus are now available to answer these questions and to assist principals to recognize a school library program that produces students who are avid readers, learners who

are information literate, and teachers who collaborate with the library media specialist to design and teach information and technology rich lessons.

*Indiana Learns: Increasing Indiana Student Academic Achievement Through School Library Media and Technology Programs*, by Dr. David Loertscher, examines the type of student who can flourish in an information and technology-rich environment and then presents strategies for developing a library media program that will ensure the success of every student. *Reinventing Indiana's School Library Media Programs in the Age of Technology: A Handbook for Principals and Superintendents*, also by Dr. Loertscher, provides ideas for administrators who want to maximize the impact of information technologies and the library media program on teaching and learning.

Both books are available free to Indiana administrators. Find more information at [www.indianalearns.org](http://www.indianalearns.org) or contact Connie Champlin at the IDOE, 317-232-9123, [cchamp@iquest.net](mailto:cchamp@iquest.net).



### QUOTE CORNER

*"Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology."*

John Tudor



continued on page 1

## INNOVATION

Since the web site is an extension of the school, the use of appropriate software and the most current techniques is required. The webmaster needs adequate time to maintain the web site. An unchanging and/or poorly supported web site suggests the lack of interest. In other words, keep the site *current!*

Two forgotten or overlooked resources are:

- **Students:** Generally, they are more current in computer techniques than adults. Be sure to indicate the participation by students in the web site.
  - **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards:** School web sites should be sensitive to ADA compliance standards. Most schools serve the disabled. Be sure this segment of the population can interact with the web site. A good starting resource is the following: [www.cast.org/bobby](http://www.cast.org/bobby)
- The introduction of Public Law 221 is another issue. PL 221 has an impact on how the schools demonstrate accountability for students' learning.

The necessity of using emerging technologies, imagination, and well-developed skills are paramount. Since a major objective is to make all efforts cost effective, the school web site becomes a key element.

## INTERACTION

An important, but often forgotten aspect of putting the school in the best possible light is ensuring that the web site is interactive and "user-friendly".

- Navigating between pages should be easy and relatively quick.
- Slow loading pages due to multiple graphics causes many visitors to leave the web site before the visit is complete.
- There should be multiple opportunities for visitors to ask questions and/or make comments. The following work very well:

- 1. Bulletin Board:** Provides a place where information can be shared.
- 2. Guest book:** As a rule, good, although infrequent, comments can be gleaned from this.
- 3. Surveys:** Always be sure that at least one survey is being taken on the website. Controversial topics should be avoided. This is an excellent 'hook' for bringing people back to the site.
- 4. Email Links:** Provide an email link on every page. If visitors need to search for places to submit emails, they usually don't and these are missed opportunities
- 5. Map:** There should be a well-labeled map showing visitors how to get to the school. People are most appreciative of this feature, and, in many respects, the map proclaims, "Come visit my neighborhood."

## INVOLVEMENT

Involvement is the ultimate goal of a public relations effort. After visitors have left the website, the objective was met if they:

- felt that something was gained;
- learned something;
- want to return in the future.

In other words, if visitors felt welcome and had a sense that they had actually visited the school, they will enthusiastically revisit the site.

Developing a good web site that results in effective public relations is not an insurmountable task. It requires a collaborative planning effort and commitment among the administration, faculty, staff, and, most importantly, students. If students are not part of the process, the effort is doomed.

As a technological 'infant', the Internet has tremendous potential. In a period of tight budgets and increasing accountability (i.e., PL 221), the web site can provide opportunities that have not been adequately explored by most schools.

A good web site can involve the community, and be an excellent resource for sharing information. On the other hand, a poor web site reflects a missed opportunity whereby the community is not informed.

Quite simply, the ultimate public relations goal is for one of the school's neighbors, who did not attend the school and has no children to say, "*That is my school!*"

**Harry L. Jones**  
HAS, Inc.  
VP- Consulting Services

**John W. McClain Ph.D.**  
HAS, Inc.  
Senior Systems Consultant

**HAS**  
Information  
Technology  
Specialists

## Great Web Sites for Administrator Professional Development

### ASAP [ideanet.doe.state.in.us/asap](http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/asap)

The Indiana Accountability System for Academic Progress offers individual school data, information on the school improvement plans through PL 221, best practice strategies and lesson plans, and professional development opportunities.

### INSPIRE [www.inspire.net](http://www.inspire.net)

INSPIRE offers electronic magazines, encyclopedias, and other resources to all Indiana residents for your information needs. Research current events, science, business, health, notable people, hobbies, and much more from your library, school, home or office.

### Lesson Locator [www.lessonlocator.org](http://www.lessonlocator.org)

Do you need a lesson plan that addresses the 4th grade English standard 3.3? Here is the place to find just that. With over 1000 lesson plans that directly meet the Indiana state standards, this site is great for administrators and teachers.

### PEER: Position By Category [www.doe.state.in.us/peer/welcome.html](http://www.doe.state.in.us/peer/welcome.html)

Looking for a hard to find teaching candidate? This site allows you to browse teacher candidate resumes. You can also post your buildings job opening and look at other opening around the state in all certified areas.

### Public Law Info Center [www.doe.state.in.us/pl221/welcome.html](http://www.doe.state.in.us/pl221/welcome.html)

This site provides useful information about Public Law 221. You will also find the Indiana State Board of Education Sets Requirements for School Categories, various updates, and the Approved Rile for School Accountability.

# IndianaNEXT

*...built on past success and future promise*



Where can you learn how to use technology to improve teaching and learning, manage data, and communicate with stakeholders— as well as, receive \$1,500 to apply towards accomplishing your school improvement goals? *IndianaNEXT!!!*

Over 700 administrators have already participated in *IndianaNEXT* and another 700 will have the chance to participate this year. Register online at [www.indiananext.org](http://www.indiananext.org).

The five-day program offers superintendents and principals, from public and private schools, the opportunity to develop strategies for leading systemic change, implement technology to improve student learning, develop skills in data management and communication, and model technology use.

*IndianaNEXT* begins with a two-day kick-off event in Indianapolis, facilitated by national educational consultant, Cheryl Lemke. Participants network with other school leaders, receive hands-on training in technology integration, learn about digital age skills, and set goals for using technology for school improvement.

Participants also will explore ways that technology can support their *No Child Left Behind* programs.

Choose from three kick-off events in 2003 in Indianapolis:

- March 3-4— IUPUI Conference Center
- June 23-24— Marriott East
- July 28-29— Marriott East



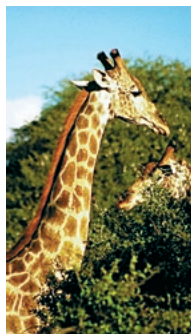
*A program that brings school leaders and technology together to improve learning.*



The remaining three days of the program are chosen by the participant from workshops and online activities offered throughout the year. Participants develop Goal Action Plans that guide their selection of workshops and resources and receive a \$1,500 grant to support the completion of their goals (made possible by a grant from the Gates Foundation). Assistant superintendents and assistant principals may attend the kick-off and utilize the resources offered by *IndianaNEXT*, but are not eligible to receive the \$1,500 grant.

Register now at [www.indiananext.org](http://www.indiananext.org). Visit the Website for more information or contact Carolyn White at 317-232-9182 or [cwhite@doe.state.in.us](mailto:cwhite@doe.state.in.us) or e-mail [info@indiananext.org](mailto:info@indiananext.org).





# ipla

## Indiana Principal Leadership Academy

Room 229, State House  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798

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# C A L E N D A R

**Nov. 20-21** IPLA Academy Sessions (Groups 37, 38, 39)  
Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites

**Jan. 27-28** Alumni Winter Conference  
**2003** Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites

**Feb. 12-13** IPLA Academy Sessions (Groups 37, 38, 39)  
**2003** Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites

## IPLA STAFF

### Vince Barnes

Executive Director  
vbarnes@doe.state.in.us

### Becca Lamon

Associate Director  
blamon@doe.state.in.us

### Cindy George

Program Coordinator  
cgeorge@doe.state.in.us

### Krista Rigdon

Financial Officer  
krigdon@doe.state.in.us

### Ryan Stewart

Administrative Assistant  
rstewart@doe.state.in.us

For more information on the  
**Indiana Principal Leadership Academy**,  
call 317-232-9004, fax 317-232-9005  
or visit [www.doe.state.in.us/ipla](http://www.doe.state.in.us/ipla)

**Andy Roberts**, *Special Edition* Designer, [andy@tangentnet.com](mailto:andy@tangentnet.com)